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The President's Daily Brief

February 25, 1975

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

February 25, 1975

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GREECE

The armed forces were placed on alert yesterday because of what the government termed conspiratorial activity by officers linked to the former junta. A spokesman announced that the government was in full control and that there was no cause for concern.

Minister of Defense Averoff told Ambassador Kubisch privately that the coup plotting was not too serious, but that it was prudent for him to act as if it were. He said severe measures would be taken to deal with what he described as "crazy young people" within the army. Press reports indicate that 28 army officers, the highest in rank a brigadier general, have been arrested. One, Major Athanassios Perdikis, a close associate of former strongman Dimitrios Ioannidis, has been reported [redacted] to have been involved in a plot to launch a coup this week.

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The government has been moving cautiously to purge the army of supporters of the deposed junta, but junior officers are concerned that the dismissals will be more widespread. The principal aim of the plotters appears to be the removal of Greek Prime Minister Karamanlis. The junior officers fault Karamanlis for his failure to curb press attacks against the army, his legalization of the small, divided Communist Party, and his withdrawal of Greece from military participation in NATO.

This latest example of military unrest should be useful to individuals like Averoff, who have been trying to convince the press and opposition politicians that they should temper their attacks on the army.

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CYPRUS

The Turkish Cypriot constituent assembly yesterday began deliberations on a new constitution to be completed within 45 days and then submitted for popular approval in a referendum.

A high Turkish Cypriot official told the US ambassador last week that the outline of the constitution was drafted in Ankara and provides for a strong presidential system. The official believes that two parties--one supporting Rauf Denktash and one opposed to him--will contest the elections scheduled to follow the referendum.

According to the official, Ankara is pressing Denktash to give up his role as negotiator for the Turkish Cypriots in future intercommunal talks. Ankara maintains that Denktash's new position as President of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus makes it improper for him to participate in negotiations with Greek Cypriot negotiator Clerides who holds a lower official position.

The UN Security Council deliberations suggest that agreement may be reached on a change of venue for the talks and their possible expansion to include Greek and Turkish representatives as well as other participants. Such a move would lessen the impact of Denktash's non-participation if he gives up his role as negotiator.

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USSR-CHINA

Soviet spokesmen continue to take the line that there is little hope for progress in the Sino-Soviet border negotiations at Peking.

In conversations with US officials in Peking late last week, Soviet Ambassador Tolstikov and his deputy were at pains to deemphasize the importance of the return to China of the head of the Soviet border delegation, Deputy Foreign Minister Illichev. They said that Illichev, who had not been in Peking for six months, returns from time to time to see if China has any new proposals.

The chief Chinese negotiator's recent departure to attend the coronation in Nepal is another sign that the talks are not going very far very fast.

Soviet attacks on the Chinese National People's Congress have been persistent and wide-ranging, and two editorials in *Pravda* this month have stressed the theme of Maoist hostility toward the USSR and have gone so far as to say that the Chinese leaders are actively promoting a nuclear war between the US and the USSR.

The Soviets are obviously worried about the possibility of improved Chinese relations with the US and Western Europe. In a lengthy article by a leading Soviet sinologist, which appeared in the January issue of the Soviet journal *USA*, the author attacked those in the US who seek closer relations with China and deplored what he perceived as efforts by the US to exploit Sino-Soviet differences for its own benefit.

The article seems to blur, although it does not totally eliminate, the usual Soviet distinction between the anti-detente (and pro-China) forces in the US and the US government. It suggests that the Soviets are concerned about the consequences of your projected trip to China.



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IRAN-PAKISTAN

The Shah of Iran begins a three-day visit to Pakistan today to reaffirm close ties between the two countries and to demonstrate his continued support for Prime Minister Bhutto's government.

The Shah wants a politically stable neighbor because he fears manipulation of Pakistan by the Soviets, who already enjoy strong influence in India, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The Iranian leader wants Pakistan to control dissident minorities in its frontier provinces. One of these provinces, Baluchistan, borders on Iran, and Baluchis live on both sides of the border. Iran has provided helicopters and C-130 transport aircraft to Pakistan for use in meeting security problems in the province.

Pakistan, for its part, is anxious to continue receiving Iranian economic assistance. Islamabad also wants to retain Iranian backing in its long-standing quarrels with India and Afghanistan. In this regard, Bhutto wants to be sure that improvements last year in Tehran's relations with New Delhi and Kabul do not signify any lessening of support for Pakistan.

Iran last year committed around \$600 million in aid to Pakistan. A joint ministerial commission on economic cooperation was created, cooperation between the Iranian and Pakistani intelligence services was increased, and Iran indicated a willingness to help Pakistan obtain better tank engines.

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TURKEY

We present below the principal conclusions of an Interagency Intelligence Memorandum on Turkey After the US Arms Cutoff.

The Turks have no satisfactory alternative to US supply of arms, at least over the near term. Hence, the effectiveness of the Turkish armed forces and their ability to perform their key role in NATO will steadily deteriorate. The strategic implications of a protracted US cutoff could be profound, particularly in view of Turkey's geographic position anchoring NATO's southern flank and controlling Soviet access to the Mediterranean.

Although the Turks are shocked and appalled at the termination of US arms aid, their reaction thus far has been measured and they will probably avoid any rash response. If the arms cutoff continues, it is highly likely that the Turks will retaliate against the US in stages, including steps to curtail US use of facilities in Turkey. This could seriously weaken the ability of US forces--primarily naval and air--to operate in the area as well as jeopardize key intelligence collection programs.

Turkey's ties with NATO will also be damaged, but probably not as seriously as Turkish relations with the US. For at least the short term, much will depend on whether Turkey is successful in obtaining military equipment from other NATO countries to help compensate for the loss of US supply. If those countries are able to help Ankara in this way, moderate forces in Turkey will be strengthened and the country's ties to Western Europe will probably remain strong.

If, on the other hand, the Turks conclude that their basic military needs cannot be met by their European allies, they are likely to read this as de facto isolation from NATO and will react much more strongly. In these circumstances, Turkey is likely to explore alternative sources of support abroad--from Arab states, for example--but will probably not

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be able to satisfy its needs in this way. The results might be an inward-turning isolation and a reversion to domestic conservatism which could spell trouble for Turkey's economic health and its role in southern Europe.

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Turkey announced yesterday that its navy would not participate in a scheduled NATO naval exercise this week.

The Turks claimed that "technical reasons" had forced their withdrawal from the exercise, but their decision is more likely a further reaction to the halt in US military assistance. Actions like this allow Ankara to demonstrate pique over the aid cut-off without seriously affecting Turkey's NATO relationship.

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ETHIOPIA

There were no reports of significant fighting between Ethiopian government forces and rebels in Eritrea yesterday, although air force planes continued to bomb suspected rebel positions northwest of Asmara. [redacted]

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The US embassy in Addis Ababa reports that, despite the fighting in Eritrea and widespread unrest in other parts of the country, the capital remains reasonably well-policed and is not likely to experience a general breakdown of law and order in the near future. Residents, however, are tense and fearful. This is particularly true of Eritreans and Moslems, who fear they will become victims of the ruling military council's psychological campaign against Eritrean separatists and their Arab supporters. Other residents are anticipating rebel terrorist incidents in Addis Ababa in retaliation against government military operations in Eritrea.

The council is attempting to streamline its operations to deal more effectively with Ethiopia's many problems. It voted on February 15 to eliminate its subcommittees in the provinces and is now considering the reduction of its own membership from 120 to about 30. Major Mengistu Haile-mariam, the council's first vice chairman, was responsible for winning majority approval of these decisions, despite opposition from other influential members. Mengistu's success is another sign of his strong position on the council.

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NOTES

The military action in Cambodia remains centered along the Mekong River and around Phnom Penh.

The government navy base at Neak Luong has been the target of intense Khmer communist shelling in the past few days, and several outposts along the base's outer perimeter are under ground attack. Communist attacks are also keeping government troops pinned down at two beachheads along the lower Mekong.

The insurgents continue to fire rockets into Phnom Penh's Pochentong airport, but have failed to interrupt airlift operations. Although air deliveries have so far been limited to ammunition, some rice and fuel are scheduled to begin arriving late this week. The fighting near the capital is southwest of the airport and along the city's northwestern defenses.

* * *

Soviet Defense Minister Grechko arrived in New Delhi yesterday for a three-day visit during which he will talk about new Soviet military aid to India.

Grechko may also seek the use of Indian port facilities for Soviet warships and of Indian air-fields by Soviet aircraft for "space support missions." Soviet navy and air force commanders are with Grechko. The Soviets may believe that the Indians will be more receptive now that the US arms embargo on the sale of arms to South Asia has been lifted. The Indians have rejected Soviet requests for military facilities in the past; we believe they will be reluctant to reverse this policy.

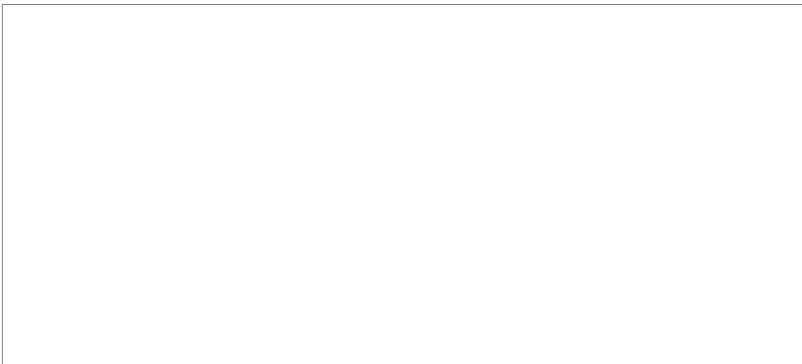
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*Soviet deliveries of MIG-23s to Egypt under a
1973 arms agreement are continuing.*

Four MIG-23s arrived aboard a Soviet freighter on February 15, bringing to ten the number delivered since early February when they were first introduced into Egypt. A total of 24 aircraft are likely to be delivered during the next few months.

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